

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INRE-00 /026 W

----- 064338

P R 241830Z JUL 75

FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1178

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MBFR VIENNA 0404

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: SUGGESTION THAT THE US MODIFY ITS POSITION
REGARDING LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE SUGGESTS THAT WASHINGTON
AGENCIES CONSIDER WITHHOLDING A POSSIBLE OFFER TO LIMIT US TANKS
IN EXCHANGE FOR LIMITATIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEARS IN CONNECTION
WITH A WESTERN PROPOSAL ON OPTION 3. WE CONSIDER THAT THIS APPROACH
COULD IN THE LONG RUN RESULT IN LIMITATIONS NOT ONLY ON
ALLIED NUCLEARS BUT ALSO ON ALLIED TANKS AND EVEN OTHER ARMAMENTS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE THERE IS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT,
IN EXCHANGE FOR EXTENDING THE LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN
US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS TO THE WEST EUROPEANS,
THE EAST MIGHT ACCEPT LIMITATIONS ON WARSAW
PACT TANKS AND NUCLEAR ELEMENTS WITHOUT INSISTING ON
LIMITATIONS ON US OR ALLIED TANKS OR OTHER WESTERN
ARMAMENTS. SINCE THIS SECOND OUTCOME IS PREFERABLE TO
THE FIRST ONE, WE SUGGEST THAT WESTERN STRATEGY FOR
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DISCUSSION OF ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS WITH THE EAST BE

AIMED AT TESTING ITS FEASIBILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED THAT THE ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS PROBLEM IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THE WESTERN OBJECTIVE IN THIS CONNECTION IS TO ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL ARMAMENTS REDUCTIONS FOR BOTH SIDES WHILE RETAINING MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY FOR THE WEST. MEANINGFUL ARMAMENTS REDUCTIONS REQUIRE LIMITATIONS ON THOSE ARMAMENTS WITHDRAWN BY AGREEMENT. THE REQUIREMENT FOR MAXIMUM NATO FLEXIBILITY CAN BEST BE MET IF NATO IS IN A POSITION TO ARGUE THAT, IN PRINCIPLE, LIMITATIONS SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO THOSE ITEMS WHOSE WITHDRAWAL WAS BARGAINED FOR AND AGREED. THIS APPROACH WOULD CREATE A LOGICAL AND TENABLE POSITION AGAINST PROBABLE STRONG EASTERN EFFORTS TO PUSH THE EASTERN CONCEPT OF ACROSS THE BOARD ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS.

3. THESE EFFORTS WILL BE FORTHCOMING; A WELL-ATTESTED SOVIET OBJECTIVE IN THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS IS TO APPLY MAXIMUM CONTROL TO THE WESTERN EUROPEAN AND ESPECIALLY FRG MILITARY POTENTIAL. WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT CONTROLS ON THEIR OWN FORCES IN THE REDUCTION AREA IF BY SO DOING THEY ACHIEVED SIMILAR CONTROLS ON THE WEST EUROPEANS. THE MAIN BODY OF SOVIET FORCES IS IN THE USSR, WHERE IT WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY SUCH LIMITATIONS, AND THE SOVIETS COULD AFFORD TO SUBJECT THEIR FORCES IN THE REDUCTION AREA TO CONTROLS IF THEY GAINED CONTROLS OVER THE WEST EUROPEANS IN RETURN. THIS IS THE POSITION CONTAINED IN THE EASTERN DRAFT AGREEMENT, AND IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT THE GAINS AND LOSSES THIS APPROACH COULD ENTAIL FOR THE EAST WERE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED BEFORE IT WAS INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT.

4. NONETHELESS, IN ONE IMPORTANT CASE, THE US HAS DECIDED TO TAKE A POSITION WHICH ENTAILS DEPARTING FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF LIMITING ARMAMENTS CEILINGS TO ITEMS WHOSE WITHDRAWAL HAS BEEN BARGAINED FOR WHEN IT SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEKING A LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEAR ELEMENTS IN THE REDUCTION AREA AND PAYING FOR THIS WITH A POSSIBLE LIMITATION ON US TANKS.

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5. CONCEPTUALLY, THIS APPROACH OPENS THE DOOR FOR EASTERN EFFORTS TO EXTEND THE LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS TO ALLIED TANKS. THE EAST WILL PROBABLY ARGUE, AS IN THE CASE OF LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS, THAT ANY LIMITATION WHICH IS AGREED FOR US ARMAMENTS MUST BE EXTENDED TO SIMILAR NATO ARMAMENTS TO PREVENT CIRCUMVENTION. BY SUGGESTING THAT THESE COULD IN PRINCIPLE BE

LIMITATIONS ON ARMAMENTS WHICH WERE NOT WITHDRAWN, THE PRESENT US APPROACH WOULD ALSO OPEN THE WAY FOR EASTERN EFFORTS TO EXTEND LIMITATIONS TO US AND ALLIED ARMAMENTS OTHER THAN TANKS. ALLIED ATTENTION HAS NOT YET FOCUSED ON THESE POTENTIAL RISKS OF PROPOSING A LIMIT ON US TANKS, BUT IT PROBABLY WILL.

6. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THERE MIGHT BE A MAJOR PUBLIC PRESENTATIONAL PROBLEM IF AN MBFR AGREEMENT DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY LIMITATION OF SOVIET NUCLEARS IN THE REDUCTION AREA AND THAT SOME LIMITATION THEREFORE HAS TO BE ENVISAGED. BUT, OWING TO THE GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE MILITARY VALUE OF SUCH A LIMITATION IS LOW AND THE WEST SHOULD NOT PAY TOO MUCH FOR IT.

7. GIVEN THIS FACT, THE PRICE WHICH THE US NOW ENVISAGES PAYING TO SECURE LIMITATIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEARS -- NAMELY, LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS -- SEEMS HIGH, BOTH IN MILITARY TERMS AND IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL COSTS IN US RELATIONS WITH ITS ALLIES. IT MAY IN FACT BE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEARS FOR LESS THAN THE US IS NOW CONTEMPLATING OFFERING BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF SOVIET PRIORITIES WITH REGARD TO ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS, BOTH ON THE ALLIES AND ON THEMSELVES.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INRE-00 /026 W
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FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA
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INFO USMISSION NATO
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8. ONE WAY TO TEST THIS ASSESSMENT MIGHT BE AS FOLLOWS:

A. AS NOW INTENDED, THE ALLIES WOULD FIRST ATTEMPT TO POSTPONE DISCUSSION OF ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON REDUCTIONS.

B. WHEN THE TIME COMES, THE ALLIES COULD SEEK TO RESTRICT DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS TO THE ISSUE OF LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND SOVIET TANKS, USING THE ARGUMENT WITH THE SOVIETS THAT ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE ONLY FOR ITEMS WHOSE WITHDRAWAL IS BARGAINED FOR.

C. THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY SEEK TO EXTEND LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEARS TO ANALOGOUS ALLIED NUCLEAR ELEMENTS. THE WEST WOULD RESIST THESE EFFORTS.

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D. NONETHELESS, THE WEST WOULD ASK FOR UNILATERAL NON-RECIPROCAL RESTRICTION OF SOVIET NUCLEAR ELEMENTS IN THE REDUCTION AREA ANALOGOUS TO THOSE WITHDRAWN BY THE US.

E. THIS MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED TO THE EAST AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL RULE OF RESTRICTING LIMITATIONS ONLY TO WITHDRAWN ARMAMENTS ON THE GROUNDS THAT WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND IT IF THE WEST HAD MADE AN IMPORTANT REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND THE EAST WAS NOT PREVENTED EVEN FROM INCREASING ANALOGOUS ELEMENTS. WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES COULD SAY THAT THE NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS ON THE SOVIET TERRITORY ADJACENT TO THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS WOULD NOT BE LIMITED, AND THAT THE SOVIETS IN ANY CASE DO NOT HAVE IN THE AREA MISSILE LAUNCHERS OF THE TYPE TO BE LIMITED. MOREOVER, IN THE EVENT OF CRISIS ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT AND NUCLEAR WARHEADS COULD EASILY BE MOVED IN. BECAUSE IT WOULD BE PRESENTED AS A SPECIAL CASE, FLOWING FROM THE US REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS, THIS APPROACH WOULD NOT WEAKEN THE CASE AGAINST EXTENDING LIMITATIONS TO OTHER ARMAMENTS TO THE SAME EXTENT AS THE PRESENT US APPROACH OF BARGAINING FOR LIMITS ON SOVIET NUCLEARS IN RETURN FOR LIMITS ON US TANKS.

F. DESPITE WESTERN ARGUMENTS OF THIS TYPE, IT IS PROBABLY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD REFUSE THIS PROPOSAL.

G. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR EXTENSION OF LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS TO THE WEST EUROPEANS.

H. AFTER FURTHER BARGAINING, THE WEST COULD OFFER TO ACCEPT EXTENSION TO THE WEST EUROPEANS OF LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS IN RETURN FOR:

(1) A LIMITATION ON ANALOGOUS SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS IN THE AREA.

(2) EXTENSION OF THE SOVIET TANK LIMITATION TO THE EASTERN EUROPEANS.

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(3) ABANDONMENT OF EASTERN EFFORTS TO GAIN AGREEMENT TO LIMITATIONS OF OTHER WESTERN ARMAMENTS.

9. DESPITE THE LACK OF FORMAL MUTUALITY IN THIS APPROACH, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THINKING THAT IT MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE ACCEPTED BY THE EAST:

A. SOVIET INTEREST IN EXTENDING NUCLEAR LIMITATIONS TO THE WEST EUROPEANS MAY WELL BE MORE INTENSE THAN SOVIET INTEREST IN MAINTAINING COMPLETE NUCLEAR FREEDOM FOR ITSELF IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS, AND MORE INTENSE THAN SOVIET INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE FREEDOM OF ITS EAST EUROPEAN ALLIES, ALREADY WELL EQUIPPED WITH TANKS, TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF THEIR TANKS.

B. SOVIET INTEREST IN EXTENDING NUCLEAR LIMITATIONS TO WEST EUROPEANS IS ALSO PROBABLY HIGHER THAN WESTERN INTEREST EITHER IN EXTENDING NUCLEAR LIMITATIONS TO THE WARSAW PACT OR TANK LIMITATIONS TO THE EAST EUROPEANS.

10. IF THIS ANALYSIS IS CORRECT, THE WEST SHOULD HAVE A NEGOTIATING EDGE ON THIS ISSUE WHICH IT SHOULD AT LEAST SEEK TO TEST AND TO UTILIZE BEFORE PROPOSING LIMITS ON US TANKS TO THE EAST, WITH THE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES THAT MOVE COULD ENTAIL.

11. IF SUCCESSFUL, THE OUTCOME OF THIS APPROACH WOULD BE THAT THERE WOULD BE ONLY ONE LIMITATION ON NATO ARMAMENTS, NAMELY, ON WESTERN NUCLEAR ELEMENTS OF THE KIND WITHDRAWN BY THE US, BUT THAT THERE WOULD BE LIMITATIONS ON BOTH WARSAW PACT TANKS AND NUCLEAR ELEMENTS.

12. IF THE EFFORT PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL, IT STILL WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE ALLIES, AFTER THE WEST HAD ESTABLISHED THE POINT THAT ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO ONLY A FEW MAJOR ITEMS, EITHER TO ACCEPT SOME FORM OF LIMITATIONS WITH ROOM AT THE TOP ON US TANKS OR TO REVIEW THE WESTERN POSITION REGARDING A LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEAR.

QEM THIS OVERALL APPROACH MIGHT ALSO PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR
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AN UNDERSTANDING ON ARMAMENTS LIMITATIONS WITH THE FRG AND THE UK WHEN TRILATERAL DIALOGUE ON THIS SUBJECT HAS REACHED AN APPROPRIATE POINT. THE FRG AND UK MIGHT BE MORE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSION OF LIMITATIONS ON WITHDRAWN US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS TO THE WESTERN EUROPEANS IF THEY THOUGHT THERE WAS A REASONABLE CHANCE THAT THIS WOULD BE THE SOLE ARMAMENT LIMITATION ON THE NATO ALLIES AND THAT, THROUGH ACCEPTING IT, THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO AVOID LIMITATIONS ON OTHER ARMAMENTS. IT IS, IN ANY EVENT, OUR VIEW THAT THE EAST WILL NOT ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT CONTAINING US NUCLEAR WITHDRAWALS AND LIMITATIONS ON RESIDUAL LEVELS OF WITHDRAWN ARMAMENTS IF THOSE LIMITATIONS ARE NOT EXTENDED IN SOME WAY TO THE OTHER NATO DIRECT PARTICIPANTS.

14. IT MAY NOT BE FEASIBLE TO WORK OUT AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS BASIS IN ADVANCE WITH THE UK AND FRG. HOWEVER, THE US COULD STILL DECIDE TO PURSUE THE GENERAL COURSE DESCRIBED HERE, DEFERRING THE ATTEMPT TO SECURE ALLIED AGREEMENT TO IT TO A LATER POINT IN THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS ON OPTION 3 AND ARMAMENT LIMITATIONS. IF THIS COURSE IS ADOPTED, THE US COULD IN THE COURSE OF CURRENT NATO CONSULTATIONS ON OPTION 3 EXPLAIN TO THE ALLIES

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO USMISSION NATO
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THAT, ON FURTHER REFLECTION, IT WISHED TO DRAW BACK FROM THE IDEA OF LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS IN FAVOR OF A UNILATERAL LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEARS IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS. THEN, AFTER OPTION 3 IS ADVANCED TO THE EAST, THE US COULD WAIT FOR DEADLOCK TO DEVELOP BETWEEN THE WESTERN PROPOSAL TO APPLY NUCLEAR CONSTRAINTS TO THE SOVIETS AND THE EXPECTED EASTERN PRESSURE TO EXTEND US NUCLEAR LIMITATIONS TO ALL OF NATO. AT THAT POINT, THE US COULD SUGGEST TO THE ALLIES THE APPROACH DESCRIBED IN THIS MESSAGE.

15. IF WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONSIDER THESE CONSIDERATIONS TO HAVE SOME VALIDITY, THEN IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE FOR THE US TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

A. TO DELETE THE IDEA THAT THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT LIMITATIONS ON ITS TANKS FROM THE DRAFT GUIDANCE TO THE AD HOC GROUP AND THE SUPPLEMENT, EXPLAINING TO THE ALLIES THAT, ON REFLECTION, THE US WAS NOT CONVINCED OF THE NECESSITY OF TAKING THIS STEP.

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B. INSTEAD, TO INSERT LANGUAGE INTO THE SUPPLEMENT INDICATING THAT THE WEST SHOULD RESIST POSSIBLE EASTERN EFFORTS TO PUT LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS BY STATING THAT THESE TANKS SHOULD RECEIVE PARALLEL TREATMENT WITH THE REMAINING ARMAMENTS (OTHER THAN TANKS) OF THE WITHDRAWN SOVIET TANK ARMY: THE WEST IS NOT ASKING FOR LIMITATIONS ON THESE ELEMENTS NOR SHOULD THE EAST ASK FOR LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS.

C. FRG AND UK WOULD BE ASKED TO GO ALONG WITH DROPPING THE CONCEPT OF POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS FROM THE GUIDANCE AND FROM THE OTHER OPTION 3 PAPERS CURRENTLY

BEING CONSIDERED BY THE SPC, WITH THE RATIONALE THAT IT IS
NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS OR AGREE ON FALLBACK POSITIONS IN
THE NAC/SPC FORUM. IN A TRILATERAL CONTEXT, THE UK WOULD BE
ASKED TO ADD A TREATMENT OF POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS ON US TANKS TO
THE FALLBACK PAPER IT IS DRAFTING.RESOR

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